PRESS RELEASE

Dream baby dream
Oh dream baby dream
Keep those dreams burnin'
Yeah it's the dreams that keep you free baby
Dream baby dream, Forever

DREAM BABY DREAM at MaMO is a new solo exhibition by performance artist and archivist april vendetta, opening in September 2025, with a public action on August 31, 2025. april vendetta's work combines physical media with digital formats, including video, photography, sculpture, and live performance, to explore the resilience of the human body within societal power structures. The artworks in the exhibition include embellished photographs featuring documentation of the vendetta's partner during pregnancy, as well as self-portraits that coincide with vendetta's first year as a parent. This timespan also marks vendetta's return to their hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, after leaving the state in 2008.

The title of the exhibition, *DREAM BABY DREAM*, is inspired by the electronic, proto-punk legends, Suicide's 1979 song. Written by the band's duo Martin Rev and Alan Vega, the song is an ethereal anthem, a call to remain hopeful, even in the darkest times. Alan Vega was known for his confrontational stage performances and abrasive vocals. The band's style of "punk" music was often misunderstood due to its lack of guitars and its use of a drum machine taken from a church organ. Suicide would frequently get booed off the stage, even in iconic punk clubs like New York's CBGBs.

In *DREAM BABY DREAM,* vendetta's work tethers absurdist humor and vulnerability and acts as a mirror, a warning, and a call to action. Halloween masked self-portraiture combined with found objects become relics of a dystopian present; video works document the artist's unsanctioned public performances; large commercial banners and artist-produced t-shirts flank the narrow exhibition space; a boombox blasts The Thermals 2006 album *The Body, The Blood, The Machine* on repeat. This album depicts a world in which the United States has become a Christian fascist nation, and as a result, people are trying to escape while they still can. In this context, on August 31st, vendetta will

present a performance within and around the exhibition trailer. This public action is a rumination on state-sanctioned violence. And a reflection on the ways white supremacy, racism, anti-LGBTQAI2+ rhetoric, sexism, ageism, ableism, xenophobia, censorship, religious coercion, forced birth, and pandering patriotism march our society further down the path to oblivion. What do we do with loss and grief, both individually and collectively?

april vendetta's work is rooted in community-based performance art practices, inspired by sci-fi, tattoo culture, BDSM community, and gender play. Their no-holds-barred approach to figuration and artistic expression derives from a DIY OR DIE mentality and punk aesthetic. Their first solo exhibition, *BODY OF/AND WORK,* at DUPLEX, New York, NY, in 2023, explored archiving as an act of radical repair. In 2015, vendetta founded Human Trash Dump, an online, open-source, collaborative archive of digital media.

"Embrace diversity.
Unite—
Or be divided,
robbed,
ruled,
killed
By those who see you as prey.
Embrace diversity
Or be destroyed."

- Octavia E. Butler, Parable of the Sower